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The author, using four categories of campus subcultures suggested by Burton Clark and Martin Trow (vocational, academic, collegiate, and nonconformist), investigates the student subcultures as they appear among Bowdoin's Class of 1970. College Student Questionnaires administered to students in September and again in April indicated that there is great mobility among the students in their subculture membership. The least stable of the subcultures proved to be the one designated as vocational, while the most stable was the one designated collegiate. However, over half the students remained categorized within the same subculture in April as they had been in September. Shiftings between September and April tended to validate the ideal types as defined by Trow. Examination of the Clark-Trow subcultures promises to be a useful way for college personnel to learn more about their students. (CJ)

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STUDENT SUBCULTURES ON THE BOWDOIN CAMPUS

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Jerry Wayne Brown
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CLARK-TROW SUBCULTURES

One fruitful method of discussing the characteristics of college populations is to divide it into appropriate subgroups so that relevant contrasts and comparisons can be made among such groups. This technique permits intermediate generalizations about certain characteristics which are not shared equally by the entire class.

Sociologists Burton Clark and Martin Trow have recently suggested the presence on most college campuses of four distinct subcultures, a "vocational" subculture, an "academic" subculture, a "collegiate" subculture, and a "nonconformist" subculture. These abstract and idealized subcultures are refinements of a hypothetical set of dichotomous factors which are presumably related to the impact of college on students and to the value systems through which the college experience is mediated to students. The inter-relationships between these factors may be expressed diagrammatically as in Figure 1.

The primary distinction of the "academic" subculture is its dual allegiance to college and to the world of ideas; the "vocational" subculture is little involved with either value; the "collegiate" subculture is positively allied with the institution, but not deeply committed to ideas; the "nonconformist" subculture is deeply identified with ideas but not deeply loyal to the institution.

Trow has offered brief descriptions of these subcultures in paragraph form.

Vocational Subculture

To these students, many of them married, most of them working anywhere from 20 to 40 hours a week, college is largely "off-the-job training," an organization of courses and credits leading to a diploma and a better job than they could otherwise command. These students have very little attachment to the college where they buy their education somewhat as one buys groceries. But like the collegiate culture, these students, for whom college is an adjunct to the world of jobs, are also resistant to intellectual demands on them beyond what is required to pass the course. To many of these hard-driven students, ideas and scholarship are as much a luxury (and distraction) as are sports and fraternities...the symbol of this vocationally oriented college culture is the student placement office.

Academic Subculture

Present on every college campus, although dominant on some while marginal and almost invisible on others, is the subculture of serious students, the academic culture. The essence of this system of values is its identification with the intellectual concerns of the serious faculty members. Where the collegiates pursue fun, and the job-oriented pursue skills and a diploma, these students pursue knowledge; their symbols are the library and laboratory and seminar. For these students, their attachment to the college,...is to the institution which supports intellectual values and opportunities for learning. The emotional tie is through the faculty to the college, and through the friends of similar mind and temper made in college. These students are often oriented toward vocations; but not so directly or narrowly as are the lower and lower middle class commuters who hold the "consumer-vocational" values described above:...The distinctive qualities of this group are (a) they are seriously involved in their course work beyond the minimum required for passing and graduation and (b) they identify themselves with their college and its faculty.

Collegiate Subculture

The most widely held stereotype of college life pictures the "collegiate culture," a world of football, fraternities and sororities, dates, cars and drinking, and campus fun. And a good deal of student life on many campuses revolves around the collegiate culture; it both provides substance for the stereotypes of movies and cartoons and models itself on those stereotypes. In content, this system of values and activities is not hostile to the college, to which, in fact, it generates strong loyalties and attachments. It is, however, indifferent and resistant to serious

demands emanating from the faculty, or parts of it, for an involvement with ideas and issues over and above that required to gain the diploma. This culture is characteristically middle and upper middle class--it takes money and leisure to pursue the busy round of social activities--and flourishes on, though is by no means confined to, the resident campuses of big state universities.

Nonconformist Subculture

It is in this latter respect, identification with the college, that "nonconformist," "intellectual," "alienated" students differ from their serious academic classmates. Some kind of self-consciously nonconformist student subculture exists in many of the best small liberal arts colleges, and among the undergraduates in the leading universities. These students are often deeply involved with ideas, both the ideas they encounter in their classrooms, and those that are current in the wider society of adult art, literature, and politics. To a much greater degree than their academically oriented classmates, these students use off-campus groups and currents of thought as points of reference over against the official college culture in their strategy of independence and criticism. The distinctive quality of this student style is a rather aggressive nonconformism, a critical detachment from the college they attend and its faculty (though this often conceals a strong ambivalence), and a generalized hostility to the college administration. Its chief significance is that it offers a genuine alternative, if only a temporary one, to the rebellious student seeking a distinctive identify in keeping with his own temperament and experience; in a sense it provides some intellectual content and meaning to the idealism and rebelliousness generated in adolescence in some parts of American society. Where the preceding three types of students pursue fun, a diploma, and knowledge, respectively, these students pursue an identity, not as a by-product, but as the primary and often self-conscious aim of their education. And their symbol is a distinctive style--of dress, speech, attitudes--that itself represents the identify they seek.

It should be kept in mind that Clark and Trow have described subcultures and not individual students. The subcultures must be described in terms of students who share particular attitudes and values, but movement among the subcultures is fluid--many students waver between two of the idealized types and change their orientation from time to time. Part I of the College Student Questionnaire

asks students to rank in order their preferences for four philosophies of education (Questions 49-52) and using these responses one can discover the relative size and distinctive features of these subcultures for the Class of 1970 at Bowdoin. Briefly, Bowdoin is a private, four year, all male liberal arts college of about 925, highly selective, and for the Class of 1970 the annual cost per student would have been about $3,400.

Figure 2 shows the relative strengths of these subcultures among the Class of 1970. The square root of the proportion has been made the value for the side of square, permitting comparison with a national sample of entering freshmen in the fall of 1965. A few features of the figure deserve some comment. One would expect the proportion of vocationalists at Bowdoin to be smaller than at the typical college campus since Bowdoin enrolls a small number of commuters or students from lower socio-economic groups. Indeed, it is surprising that the vocational subculture is as strongly represented at Bowdoin as it is. That the proportion of nonconformists is higher at Bowdoin than among a national sample is not surprising nor totally explicable in light of Bowdoin's selectivity and nature. One would expect the academic subculture to be more strongly represented than is the case, only one of three applicants is accepted and academic promise is the leading criteria of selection, and the comparatively larger size of the collegiate subculture which Trow thought typical at large public institutions appears as a surprise. If any one subculture of the class tends to predominate, it is the collegiate subculture.

In order to describe and define the characteristics of these four subcultures among Bowdoin's Class of 1970, scale scores from Part I of the CSQ will be examined. It should be informative to

see the difference among these subcultures across several dimensions.

Figure 3 depicts the scales for the four groups for the seven scales of the CSQ instrument. All four groups remain within one standard deviation of national norms on all scales except for the Peer Independence value for the nonconformists. In general, the nonconformists deviate most from the norms. They score higher on factors such as Family Independence, Liberalism, and Cultural Sophistication. They are drawn from families which have lower socio-economic standing than other Bowdoin groups, as can be seen by the Family Status scale. On two scales, Motivation for Grades and Social Conscience, they score lower than national norms. The low score on the Motivation for Grades scales is probably indicative of their relatively low respect for institutions and their judgments. The low score in Social Conscience reflects their feelings of "privatism," a deep concern with their own self-identity and privacy which shuts out concern with larger social issues.

The scores of the academic group most nearly resemble a straight line. Except for the nonconformists, other groups exceed their scores only along the dimension of Family Status. They score higher on the Motivation for Grades scale than any other group, and significantly higher on the Social Conscience Scale. Although they do not exceed national norms beyond one standard deviation on any scale, they probably typify as a whole the qualities which the College (particularly the faculty) most highly regards in its students.

The collegiate group scores in a predictable manner on the various scales. Since the status of this group depends largely on peer approval, it is to be expected that they would score

lowest on the Peer Independence scale. Likewise, this group scores lowest on the Family Independence scale. The score for this group on the Motivation for Grades scale may seem surprising, but since passing grades are essential to maintain one's standing in the college, and since their high school grades are relatively lower (see below), their relatively high motivation for grades probably reflects an accurate assessment of their general position in college: they must "try harder" simply to remain in college. On the Liberalism, Social Conscience, and Cultural Sophistication scales, the collegiate group ranks higher only than the vocational group.

Those students who indicated their strong preference for the vocationalist attitudes toward college are in many ways the most enigmatic of the subcultures. Their highly career centered values explain the low scores on Liberalism, Social Conscience, and Cultural Sophistication factors. But in the factor of Family Status, the vocational subgroup ranks as high as the collegiate group, considerably higher than the other two. This is not at all predictable from Trow's model, which saw this group originating in lower class working families. For some undiscoverable reason, a number of entering freshmen in the Class of 1970 from families with considerable social status felt most at home with a vocational orientation toward college.

Clark and Trow warn that these identifiable subcultures are fluid even as groups. This fluidity is demonstrated by changes in the Class of 1970 between September and April. The least stable and most enigmatic of the subcultures, the vocational, lost 76.5% of its adherents within the first six months of college.

The academic subculture lost 68% and the nonconformist group 46.1%. The sample of nonconformists is, however, too small to delineate confidently any parameters of the change. The collegiate subculture is the most stable of the groups, losing only 24.6% of its original adherents. This seems to suggest that the prevailing mode of the peer structure at Bowdoin is collegiate.

The prevalence of the collegiate style among Bowdoin undergraduates is further indicated by the fact that of those shifting from previous choices, 43.8% shifted to the collegiate choice. The academic subculture gained 25% of the shifters, the vocational 18.8% of the shifters, and the nonconformist 12.5%. After six months, the distribution of the class among the subcultures can be compared by referring to figure 4. The fluidity of these subcultures should not be overemphasized, however, since 56.9% of the class chose the same subculture in April as in September.

The shifting among Clark-Trow subgroups between September and April can be conceptualized as a purifying of the types--a conceptualization which tends to validate the ideal types as defined by Trow. That is to say, the subgroups in April seem to conform to a higher degree to Clark-Trow models.

The movement within the unstable vocational group during the first six months of college tends to move it much closer to the ideal type. Those who forsook the vocationalist subgroup stood notably higher on the Family Status scale, repairing the anomaly of the entering wealthy and vocationalist subgroup noted earlier. Men moving from the vocationalist subgroup were also developing greater independence from their peers and families; were finding greater satisfaction with the faculty and considerably

greater satisfaction with students than either non-shifting vocationalists or men changing to the vocational subculture.

Those who shifted to the vocationalist subgroup came from homes lacking status by Bowdoin standards. Compared with their colleagues across the nation, relative independence from their families actually declined. At the same time, they are relatively dissatisfied both with their fellow students and with faculty. Fifty percent of those shifting to the vocationalist subculture had made that option their second choice in September. Non-switching vocationalists might be regarded as the purest type of all. Of the three groups involved with the vocationalist subculture, they come from families of the lowest social status, they are least satisfied with the faculty, and they are least involved with extracurricular activities.

Men who shifted from the academic subgroup are somewhat harder to characterize. Three factors seem notable. They are relatively less satisfied with the faculty and students than non-shifting academics and those shifting to the academic subsculture and their peer independence is somewhat lower. Probably, the academic aspect of college has been something of a disappointment to them, and they have begun to derive more satisfaction from other aspect of college life.

Of those shifting to the academic subculture, two items seem striking. First is the growth in peer independence, probably an aspect of finding new models among faculty members and becoming more interested in the intellectual life. Secondly, one notes the rather high family status, especially when compared to the non-

shifting academics. Seventy-five percent of those shifting to the academic subculture shifted from the relatively more affluent collegiate style. In total, 66% of those shifting to the academic subculture had made it a second choice in the fall.

The non-shifting, "hard core" academics are notable for their relatively lower family status (they are probably scholarship students). They have maintained a relatively high independence from their peers, although they are substantially more satisfied with their fellow students than either those shifting to or shifting from the subculture. This probably reflects a respect for their fellows as <u>student</u> colleagues.

The three separate groups variously identified with the collegiate subculture are really quite similar except for the family status, second peer independence scale, and the extra-curricular involvement scale. Those moving to the collegiate subculture come from families of higher status. Affluence is required for this style of life, after all. Forty-seven percent of September's vocationalists are within that group. Sixty-three percent of those moving to the collegiate style had made it their second choice in September.

Those moving from the collegiate style seem remarkable only in their development of more peer independence.

Hard core collegiates, the non-shifters, have been in the process of becoming more dependent on their peers and have been extraordinarily involved in extracurricular affairs.

With the three groups variously associated with the non-conformists, one is faced with relatively small numbers which make

any judgments extremely tentative. But some speculations are in order. Men shifting to the nonconformist subculture are rather different. Only 33% of the shifters made the nonconformist style a second choice in September, and 55% had seen it as the least accurate description of themselves. Developing independence from peers and families is the most striking characteristic of this group.

Men shifting from the nonconformist style come from more affluent families, were more dependent upon their peers, and more involved with extracurricular affairs. In connection with this last observation, all the shifters had been actively engaged in at least two sports.

In contrast, the non-shifting nonconformists were singularly uninvolved with extracurricular affairs. They were not very pleased with the faculty, and for some strange reason, were relatively more dependent upon their parents. It would be most gratifying to work with a larger sample of this subculture to see if these speculative trends would hold true.

Finally, a brief look at the regrouped Clark-Trow sub-cultures seems in order. This is most easily done by examining ten scales available from CSQ part II. The whole class is rather dissatisfied with the faculty, the college administration, and rather critical of their study habits. Use of College and University Environment Scales with a sample of faculty and students suggested that disenchantment between students and faculty was mutual. This is even more perplexing in view of the fact that the student-faculty ratio at Bowdoin is about nine to one. Still,

several individual items from CSQ amply demonstrate that students expected more from faculty than they felt they received within the first few months of their college careers. The dissatisfaction with college administration will pass without comment: such dissatisfaction seems almost commonplace in 1969. The generally low assessment of study habits probably reflects the rather demanding requirements of the freshman year. Other generally low scale scores, liberalism and social conscience, are perplexing and no explanation can be attempted.

The regrouped vocationalist subculture appears much as one would expect. The college experience has been rather unexciting for them. They are dissatisfied with their fellow students as well as with faculty and administration. One feels they enjoy little respect from the faculty, and little admiration from their fellows. They are rather active in fraternities, but still seem out of place in the peer structure. They are singularly lacking in sophistication. They are rather more conservative than their peers and concerned about their study habits and generally in their academic performance. As a whole this group has neither "made it" academically or socially. Their behavior is probably self-enforcing: nothing in their college experience will likely bring them closer to their peers, their college, or the life of the mind.

The academics present a more pleasing sight. Although they do not lie on a straight line in CSQ II scale scores as much as on the scales of part I, they are a rather stable group. While they are relatively independent of peer conformity, they are rather satisfied with their fellow students. As a group, they alone

stand above the median on the satisfaction with faculty scale. One would have expected this satisfaction to have been more marked. Although not quite so active as collegiates in extra-curricular affairs, they are doing their share.

The collegiates, as one would expect, are the backbone of extracurricular activities. They are relatively dependent upon the peer culture, but to a great degree it is a peer culture which they influence. Their dissatisfaction with the faculty and administration is not dramatic, indeed it is very similar to the academics. It must be remembered that collegiates have a strong identification with their college. For the most part, any dissatisfaction with the institution is tempered by their appreciation of peer activities as opposed to courses and studies.

The nonconformist subculture is again most enigmatic. One surprising feature is the fact that they seem relatively satisfied with their fellow students. This is true in spite of the fact that they are much more independent of the peer group than their fellows. They are little concerned with the study disciplines of academic life since their identification with ideas is trans-institutional. As a group, they contribute least to organized extracurricular activities. Still, their relative cultural sophistication is prized on liberal arts campuses, and many faculty members are strongly sympathetic with this group.

If this is the "age of the student" as so many have suggested, it seems of pressing importance that administrators, teachers, and counsellors become students of their students. Examination of Clark-Trow subcultures promises to be a very useful way of facing

this task. Its promise grows with the realization that much of the total effect of the college experience is determined by a student's own approach to college and the mix of student values and attitudes in which he pursues his education.

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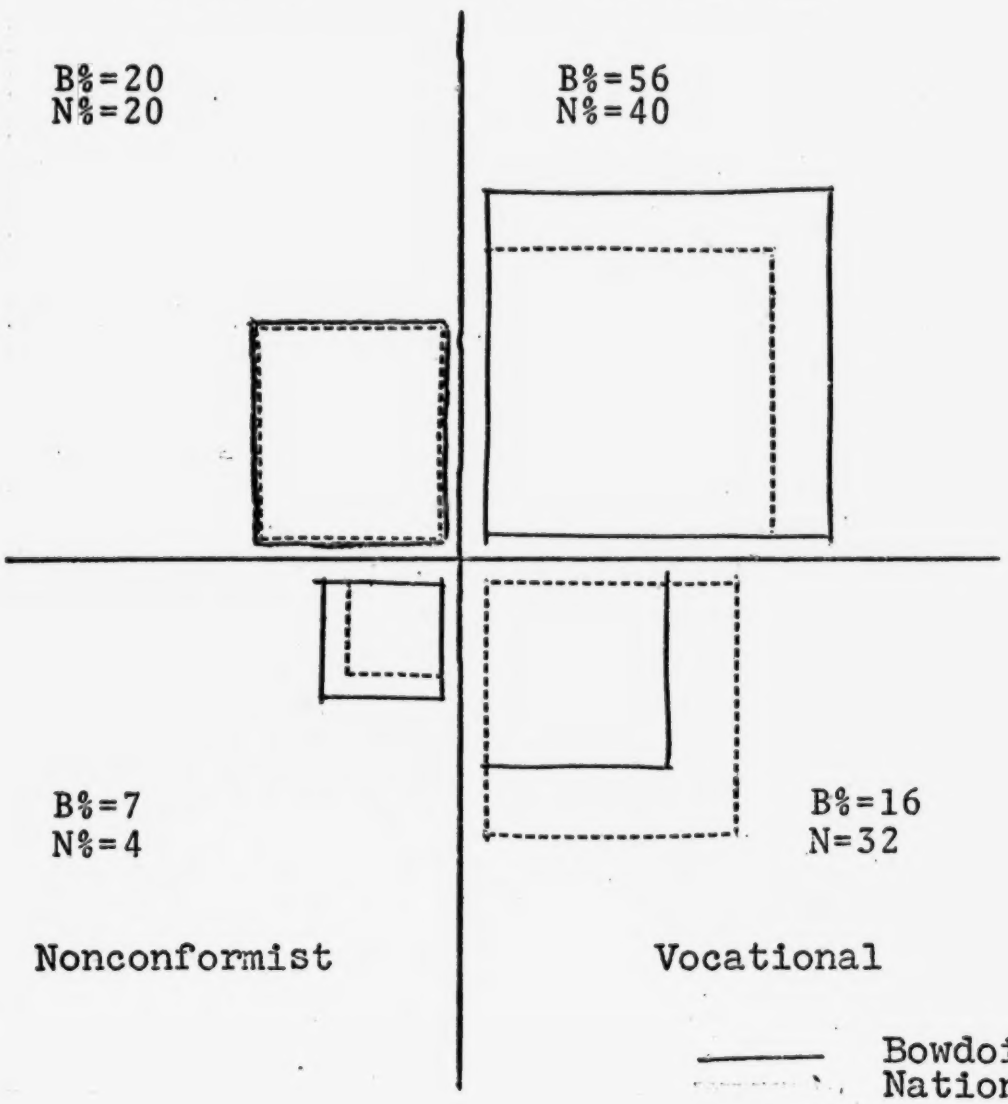
Identify with their college: Much		Academic	Collegiate
Identify with their college: Little		Nonconformist	Vocational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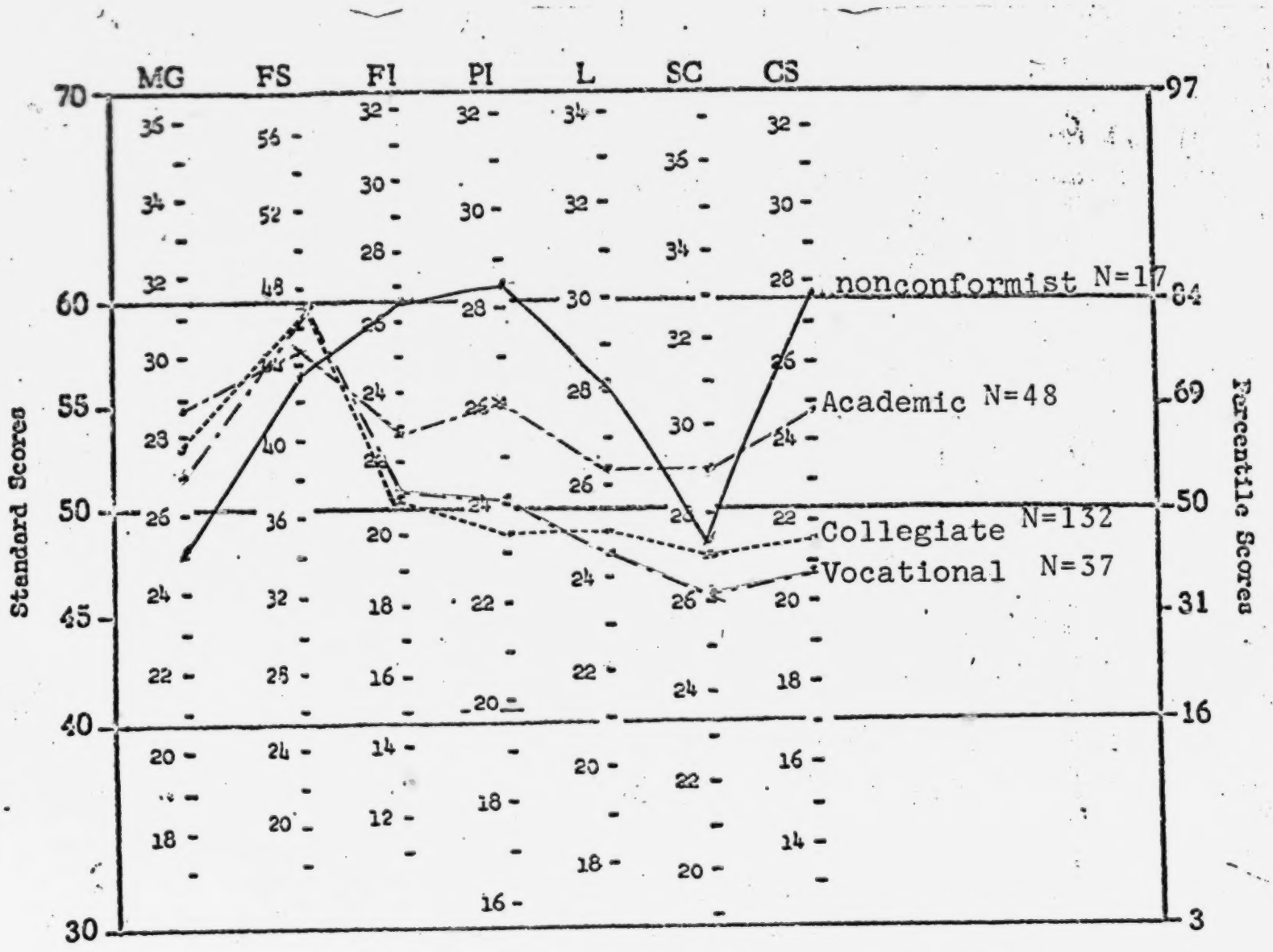
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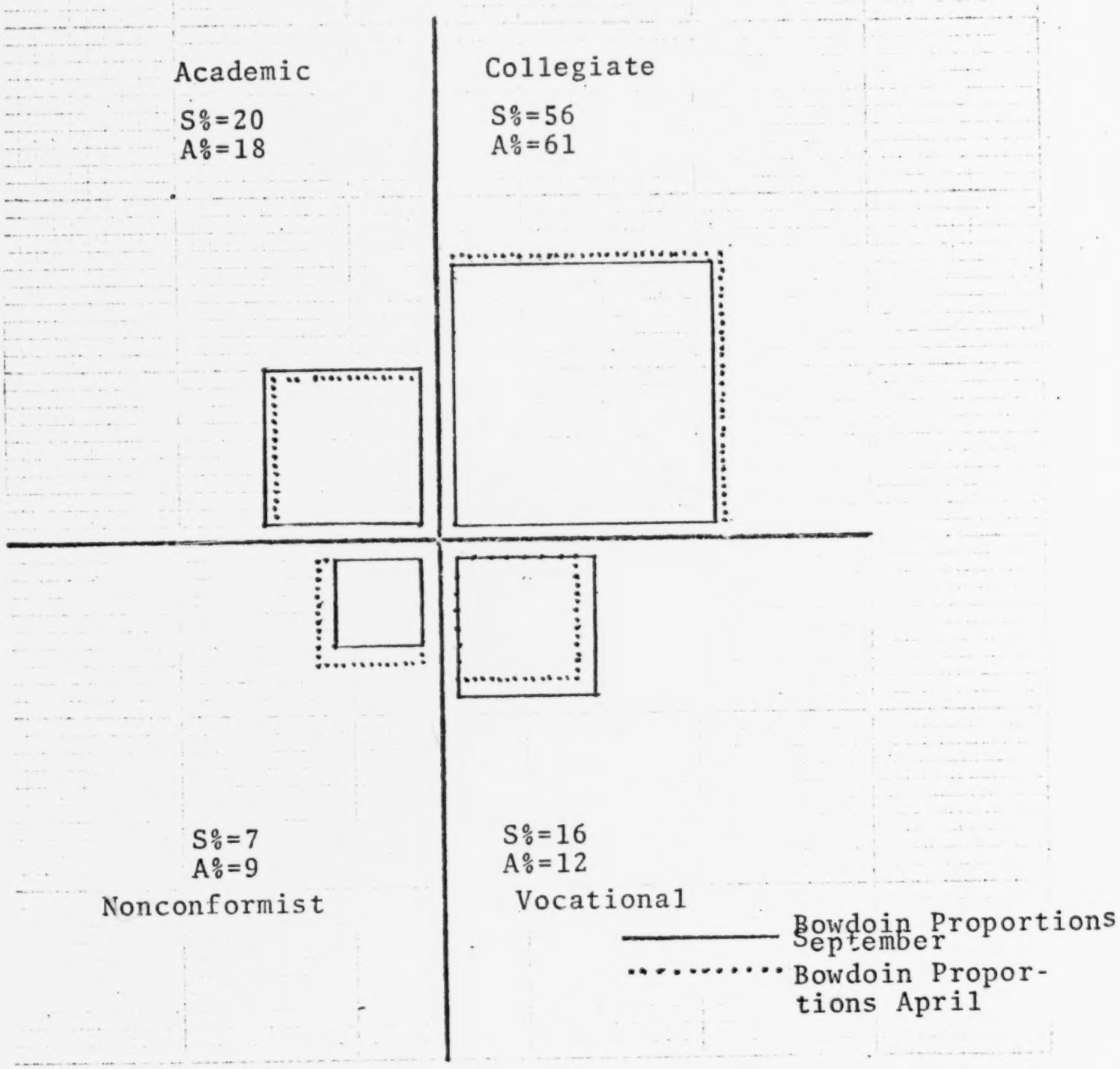
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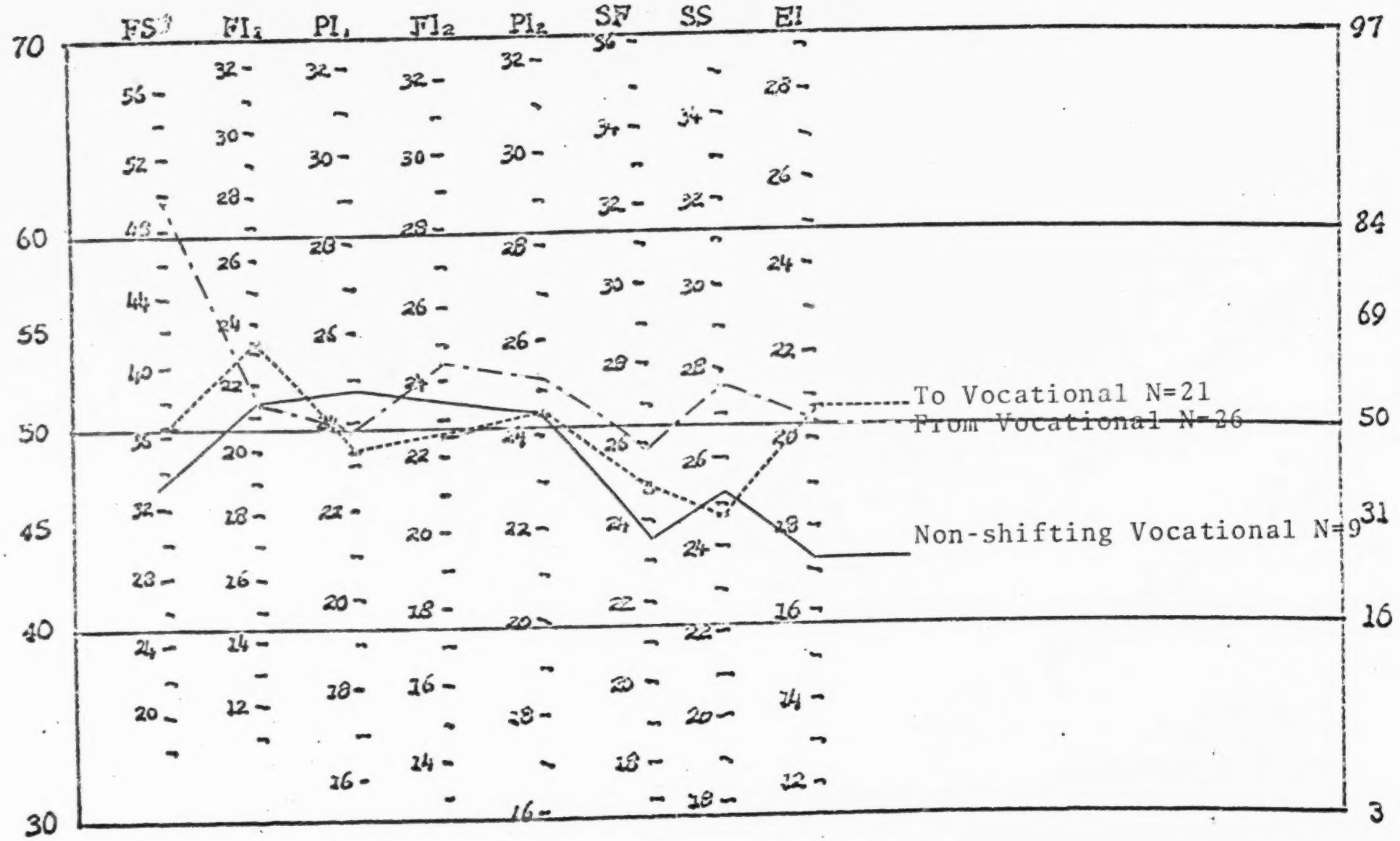
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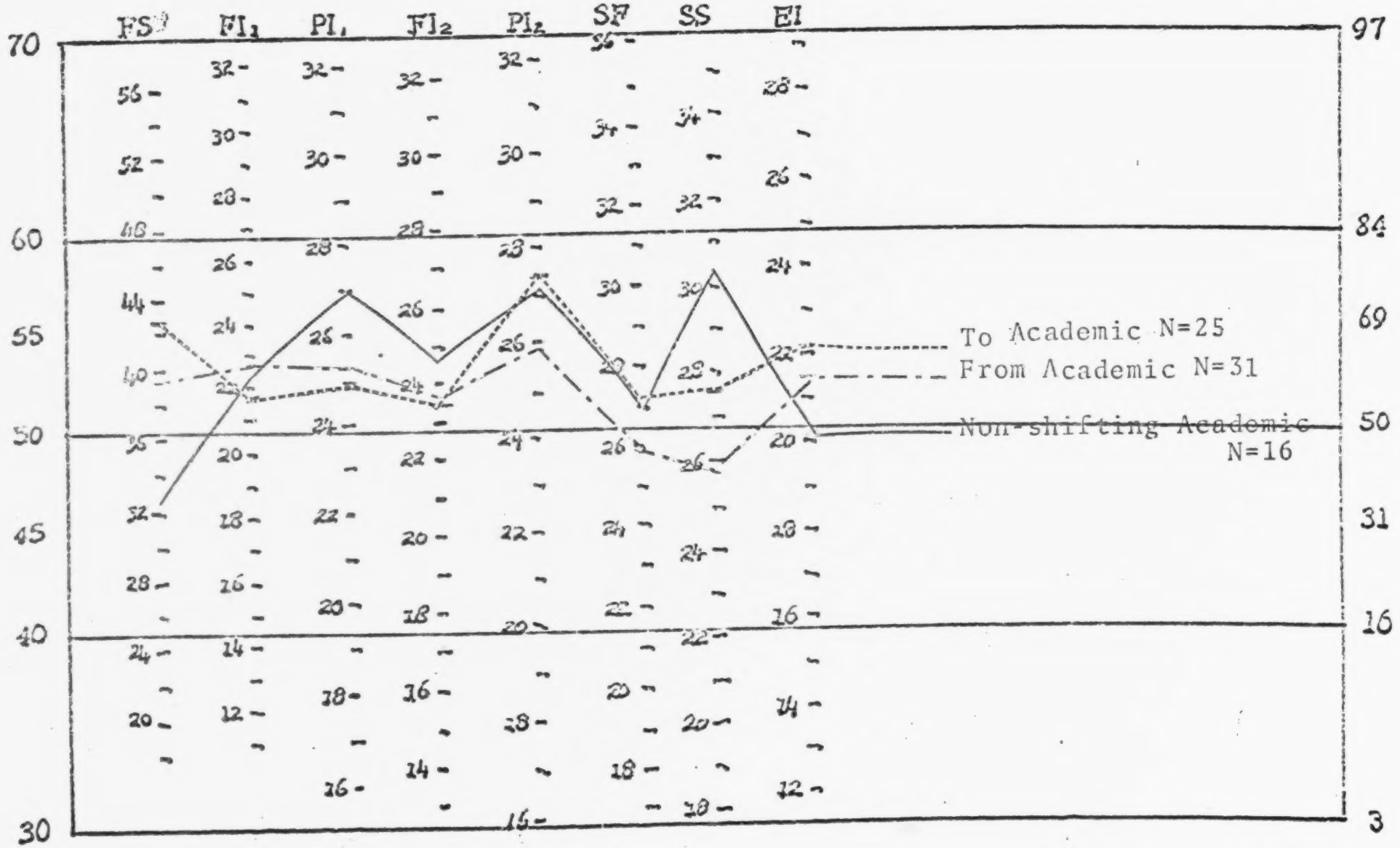
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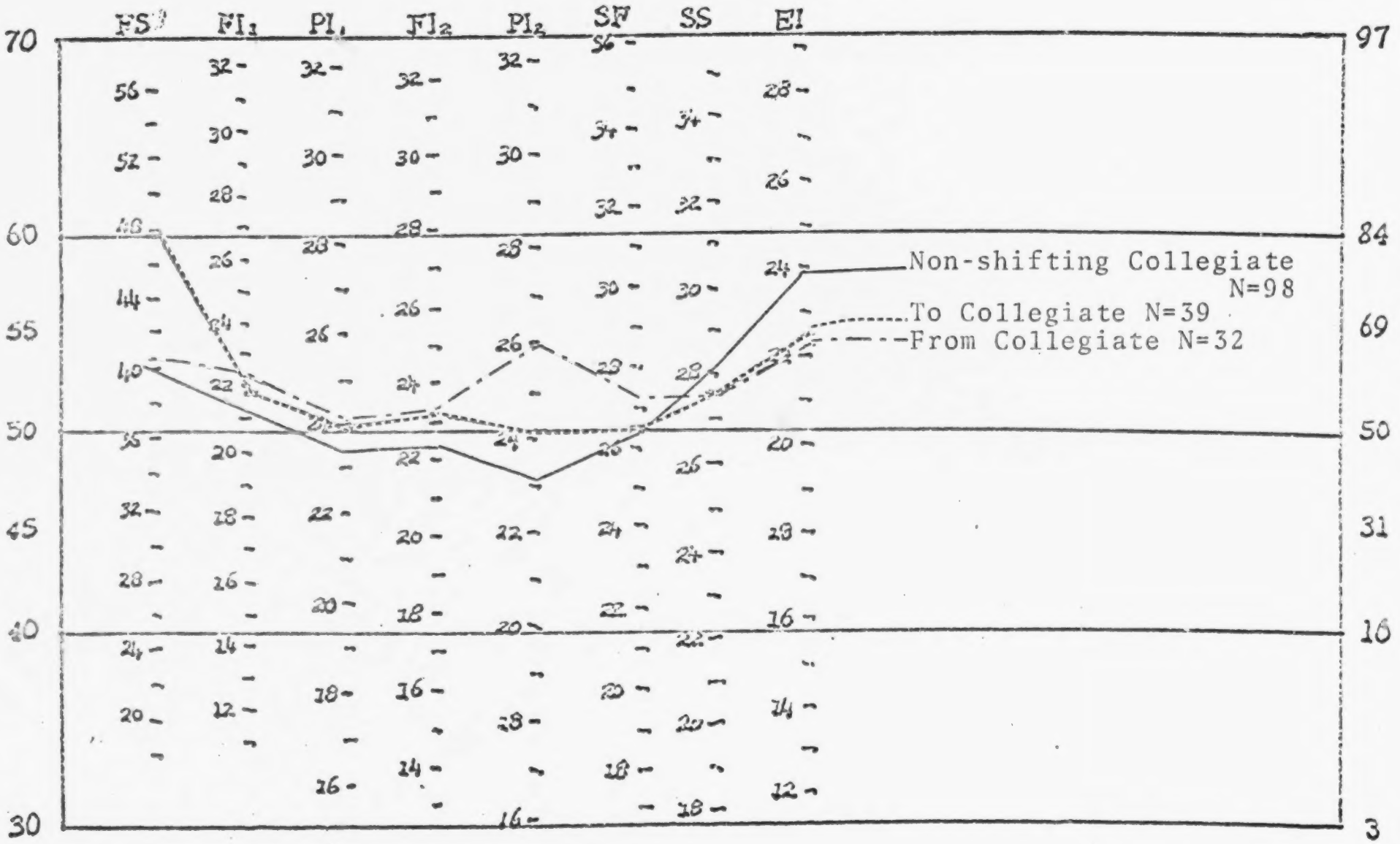
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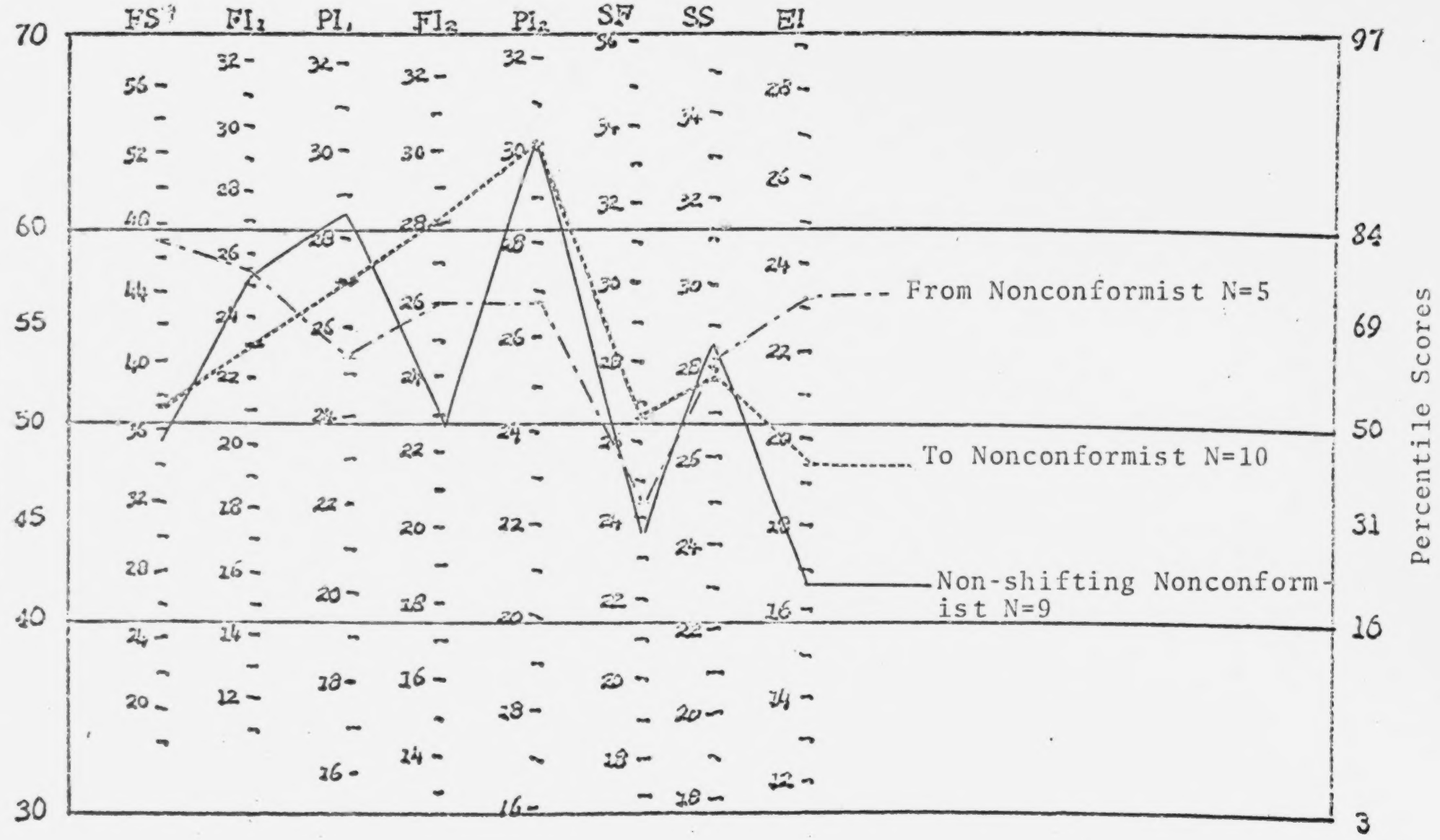
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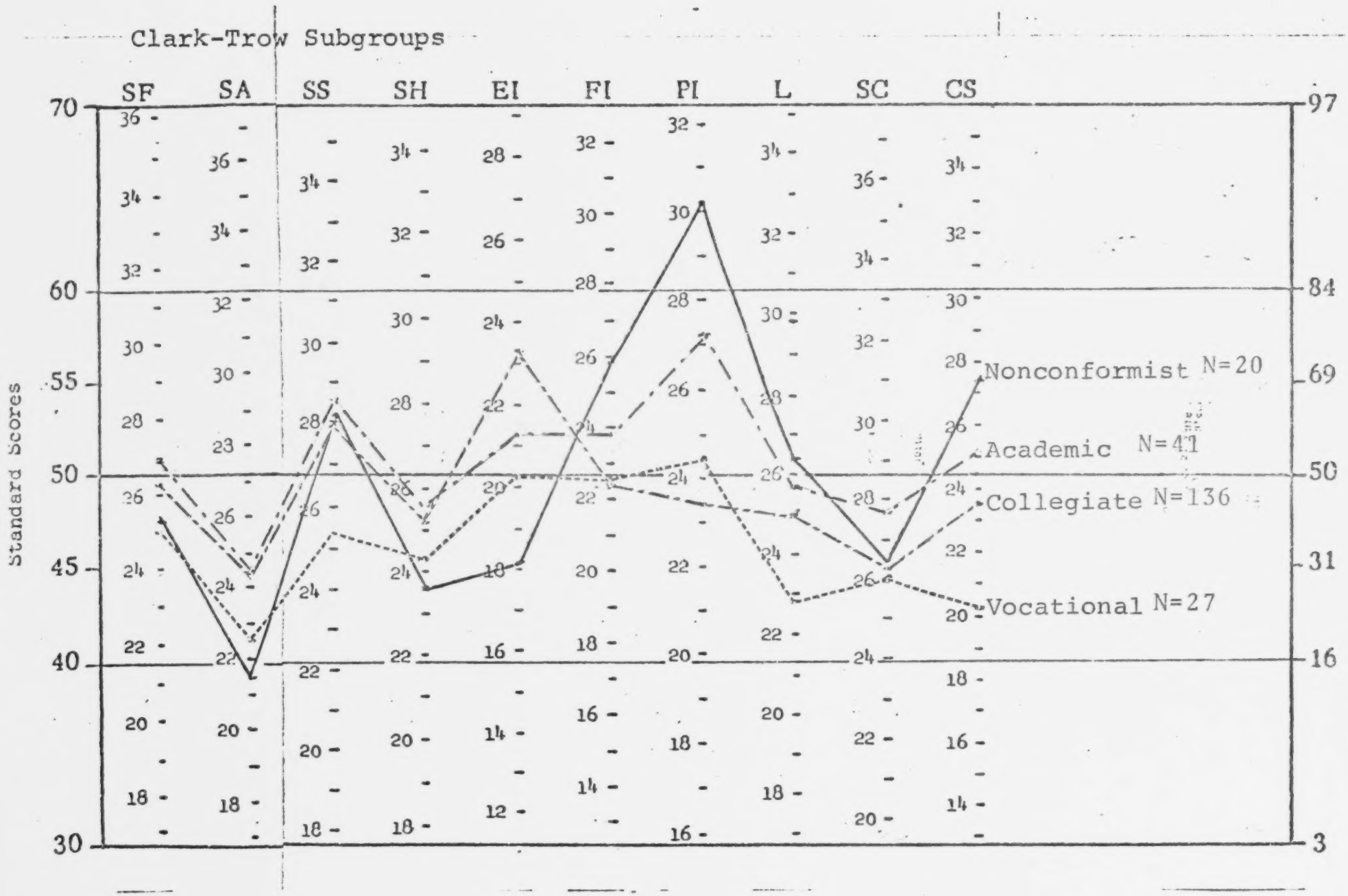
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